GRADED COURSE IN RURAL SCHOOLS

Prof. Fitzpatrick, of Gate City, Points Out Need of Such a Reform.

PLAN CLEARLY OUTLINED

Would Aid Superintendents in Their Work and Greatly Benefit Children.

At the Educational Conference held here last fall one of the ablest and most interesting papers submitted was that of Mr. F. B. Fitzpatrick, principal of the High School at Gate City, Va. Mr. Fitzpatrick is considered one of the strongest young educators in the State. His paper, which was on the subject of "Graded Course for Rural Schools, and which is full of interesting points, was as follows:

I am glad to know that our examiners are putting forth an earnest effort to have a uniform course of study for all rural schools. The introduction of such a course at this time is most opportune. The present interest and enthusiasm in education throughout the State, the new regulations that are now being introduced into our public school system and the necessity of more exactness in the articulation of primary grades with grammar grades, and grammar grades with the State High School course, will aid materially in the permanent establishment of such a course.

We all agree that such a course is desirable, hence I shall not consume your time in trying to establish the advisability of its adoption.

I have here the outline of a course of study for rural schools. It is, in the main, the same as that offered by the committee on a "standard country school" at our last annual meeting. It embraces all the branches designated by the State Board of Education with the exception of physical culture and vocal music.

First Year.

Reading—This work should begin with the word method from the board, supplemented by the chart. Later the phonetic method should be combined with the word method. At the end of about six weeks the primer should be put into the hands of the pupil.

Language—Conversation about familiar objects, such as trees, plants, fruits, minerals and animals. Get the children to talk as freely as possible. Teach the use of the period and the question mark, telling and asking sentences, use of capitals "I" and "O" and in the first word of a sentence.

Number—First ten numbers in all their combinations, first ten Roman numerals, "and sign," "take-away sign," "time sign," "division sign," counting to 100 by one's and two's. This work must be concrete, and there must be a proper association of the numbers in their combinations with familiar objects.

Spelling—Words selected from language and reading lession. Three to four new words should be given each day. They should be carefully written on the board by the teacher. Get the pupil to see the word-picture and to repeat the word after the teacher. Later the word should be analyzed phonetically. At this stage no attempt should be made at formal spelling. All words should be kept on the board from day to day for the purpose of constant drill.

Science—Easy lessons in nature, which may be combined with language.

Literature—Kindergarten rhymes, fairy tales, etc.

Writing—Copy words and easy sentences from the board. Let the pupils write their own names.

Drawing—Cube, ball, cylinder and natural objects based on those three forms.

Second Year.

Reading—The first reader should be supplemented by board work. In this as well as in the preceding grade, careful attention must be given to getting the pupil to express himself naturally. He must grasp the thought, not merely call words. The word and phonetic method should be combined in this grade.

Language—The work of the first grade should be reviewed and enlarged upon. Give easy lessons in home geography, such as fields, mountains, water and rivers. Hold interesting conversations about the earth, sun and moon. Teach use of exclamation point; "is" and "are," "was" and "were," "a" and "an," commanding and exclamatory sentences; dictate easy sentences.

Number—Review work of preceding grade. Let the child do away with concrete objects as quickly as possible. Teach second and third lines of the multiplication table; combinations of units into tens, and tens into hundreds. Teach concretely one-half of first ten numbers—pint, quart, cent, nickel, dime—and their easiest combinations. Count to 100 by one's, two's, three's; Roman numerals to L; easy formal work in adding, subtracting and multiplying.

Spelling—Words from language and reading lessons. Teach as in first grade. Pupils should now begin formal spelling after use of above method in recognizing word-pictures. Give six to seven new words every day.

Science—Lessons in nature continued.

Writing—Copy Book No. 1. Have pupils copy sentences from the board.

Literature—Easy poems and simple stories about national heroes; memory gems.

Drawing—Book No. 1. Natural objects.

Third Year.

Reading—Thought and correct expression must be especially emphasized. The reader should be supplemented by interesting history stories.

Language—Lessons in home geography continued; habits of different animals and customs of people; life and growth of plants continued; forms of letter-writing, use of capitals, comma, semicolon and quotation marks. Give dictation lessons and drill constantly on different kinds of sentences and verb forms.

Number—Fourth, fifth and sixth lines of multiplication table. Denominate numbers, addition and subtraction in harder forms thoroughly taught; easy forms of multiplication and short division; easy fractions; Roman numerals to 100; oral drills in rapid memory work.

Spelling—Words from language and reading lessons. Work should consist in spelling the words orally, using them in sentences and then writing them.

Literature—Memory gems, easy biographies, poems adapted to pupil.

Pupil—Teach as in the preceding grades.

Writing—Book No. II. Have pupils to copy sentence from the board.

Drawing—Train pupils to draw natural objects.

Fourth Year.

Reading—Teach as in third year. Supplement the reader by interesting stories.

Language—Review formal work of the third year. Teach all punctuation marks; give special attention to forms of letter writing; use dictation freely; continue use of oral geography; give picture lessons and have pupils write the stories.

Number—Multiplication and easy long division should be taught in this grade, multiplication and addition and substraction constantly reviewed. Finish multiplication table, easy fractions and denominate numbers continued. Give easy problems and teach pupils to state them. Give drills in oral work.

Spelling—Have all words used in sentences; oral and written spelling.

Science—Work of preceding grades continued.

Literature—Memory gems, poems, easy history stories.

Writing—Book No. 3.

Drawing—Natural objects.

Fifth Year.

Reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, spelling, history of Virginia, elementary science. Pupils should have text books in all subjects in this grade and in all higher grades.

Sixth Year.

Reading, writing, grammar, arithmetic, geography, spelling, history of the United States, science.

Seventh Year.

Writing, grammar, arithmetic, geography, spelling, history of the United States, agriculture.

I desire to give you now some advantages that, it seems to me, would follow the official introduction of such a course of study in all rural schools needed. First, it would lend to symmetry in mental growth. I believe the most serious defect belonging to the ungraded school is the absence of this symmetry in its product. The paramount aim of the public school course should be the development of a well-rounded character. At the completion of the high school course the mind of the boy should be trained in all of its faculties.

In my own experience as a teacher I find that nearly all pupils from the country schools are deficient in some branches.

Not Symmetrical.

Their training hesn't been symmetrical. Frequently I find pupils well prepared to pursue the study or algebra and adavanced arithmetic, but absolutely unprepared in composition and grammar. On the other hand, I find them strong in grammar and composition, but weak in arithmetic. There is a tendency on the part of the country teacher to neglect the subjects in which he is weak. And then again, not a few parents actually decry yet the teaching of anything except reading, writing and arithmetic. Undue emphasis on some subjects, and the want of proper emphasis on others result in distortion and perversion in the development of the mind. Some faculties grow, while others atrophy. The result of our last uniform examination emphasized the need of more symmetry in our training. The examiners tell us that frequently they found papers strong in arithmetic, accompanied by complete failures in grammar, composition and drawing. This serious defect in our educational system must be removed. The adoption of this uniform graded course of study would largely overcome it. It would call for a daily program and a proportionate distribution of time among the different branches of study, which would result in a harmonious development of the faculties of the mind.

Increase Attendance.

In the second place, it would tend to increase the percentage of attendance. Grades have an adhesive influence upon the student body. Attendance is one of our serious problems; the sentiment for compulsory education as its proper solution is growing rapidly. Any effort, therefore, that will increase the attendance is desirable. The graded course would appeal to the boy's pride. He would attend school regularly in order to advance with his grade. He would see at the end promotion or failure. He would be trained at the same time to stand upon the principle of merit, one of the great lessons of life. It would also appeal to the pride of parents. They love to see their children advance with their grades, and would cooperate with the teacher in keeping them in school.

This advantage is not a supposition. It has been established by experience.

Why This Difference.

In looking over the last Virginia school report I found that the average daily attendance of pupils in our cities is about ninety per cent., while the average daily attendance in our rural schools is about seventy. Why this difference in favor of the city school? I do not believe that gradation of our rural schools is a panacea for all the ills of the public school system; but I do not believe that it would increase materially the percentage of attendance in rural districts. I can see its influence in my own work. I believe it would be well to have a certificate of completion to issue to pupils graduating in the public school course. It would prove a great stimulus to public school work, and aid in increasing the attendance.

Would Help Officers.

Again, a uniform graded course for the rural schools would aid the superintendent in effective supervision. It would enable him to compare the work of the different schools and thereby stimulate a laudable emulation. For instance, he could compare examples of drawing of the third grade of one school to the efforts of drawing of the third grade of another school. This would create a desire in the poorer school to do better work. He might compare composition work of school, short written tests in different subjects, and thereby gain the relative worth of schools. This official comparison of the efficiency of the schools would stimulate pupils and teachers. It would give definiteness to the work of each.

It would aid, too, in eliminating incompetent teachers from the profession. This course calls for specific work in specific branches. New demands are made of the teacher, which he must meet or give place to his successor. Progressive teachers would meet these new demands; unprogressive one would not. They would drop out of their own accord.

Two Excuses.

In conclusion I desire to refer briefly to two excuses offered for retaining the rural ungraded school. We are told that there is not enough time for all this work. This excuse is really a strong argument for establishing this course. It implies that this work is not done in the ungraded school. It is perfectly absurd to maintain that a well graded school requires more time for instruction than an ungraded school. It is true all of this work cannot be done by one teacher in an ungraded school; it is also true that it can be done by one teacher in a well graded school. It is being done to-day by one teacher in a great many of our district schools. Organization and systemization are savers of time.

Again, we are told that it is a hindrance to advancement. This may be a real objection in a city graded school, but it is not in the rural graded school. In a rural graded school there is no objection to boys pursuing the fourth grade, say, and at the same time doing some third grade work. This cannot be done without friction in a city school. The pupil has to do the work of his room. In fact, the rural school would lend itself to graduation more readily than city schools.

A Medical Test of Sobriety.

Accused of being drunk on his own premises, a Wigton licensed victualler called Dr. Blacklock to give evidence before the Cumberland justices in his defense. The doctor said that immediately after the police visited the house defendant called at his surgery and asked to be tested for sobriety. In his presence the man walked perfectly along a straight line, stood upon one leg for three-quarters of a minute, repeated the word "hippopotamus" quickly and distinctly, and told the time by a watch to a quarter of a minute. The magistrate dismissed the case.—London Golbe.

THE COLLEGE COURSE

The following sentiment, recently uttered in Richmond by Dr. Walter H. Page, might have been used as the text of these articles: "Let us sweep away our mediaeval notions of education and substitute for them the idea of real training for efficiency and usefulness in life."

The system of education which has its efflorescence in the American college course is an established institution, which, like all other human institutions, has a history and a natural reason for its inception. Let us briefly examine its history, its contents, the sentiments regarding it, and its relations to the principles of educaton I have developed.

In the Middle Ages "the profane sciences were taught in the form of the seven arts, i. e., 'artes liberales,' a form in which antiquity also had comprehended its knowledge encyclopedically. The trivium, grammar, rhetoric and dialectics, contained the form studies, and the quadrivium contaned arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music; they were considered the studies of real knowledge. Grammar, i. e., Latin language and literature, not only claimed the most important part in the trivium, but in the entire course. It seemed the end and aim of all instruction." History of the German School System, 1 Rep. Com. Ed., 1897-98, page 8.

Of the education of the knights, we are told in the same place (page 12) that "the seven liberal arts of the clergy were supplemented by the seven knightly virtues—riding, swimming, shooting with the bow, fencing, hunting, chess-playing and poetry (rhyming)," withing even reading or writing. And if we are to judge by results, by the preponderance of successful men, the physical education of the knight was more effective than the literary education of the scholars.

Before the end of the Middle Ages dialectics had become very prominent in the schools, and Dr. Noble, in the article we have cited, says: "Men began to tire of the once highly prized scholastics, and not to regard disputations in the universities as the highest proofs of human intelligence, but as idle jingling of words."

The revival of learning added Greek to Latin in the schools, and in both languages the classical works and forms were cultivated. This was "humanism," an attempt to renew the culture of antiquity by studying its two leading languages, which have since been grandiloquently called the "humanities."

About A. D. 1700 the theory was "to obtain from the classics a treasure of human knowledge." But "the schools were still pursuing the old routine which the well-known author Nicolai ridiculed when saying, they declined, conjugated, expounded, analyzed, scanned, phrased and what not.'" In spite of all the beauty of the classical compositions, their influence is fatally attenuated by the years of routine work required to read them in the original.

"In the preliminary discussions (as to humanism) the masters of the faculties of arts declared science had to treat with things, not words. He who knew words was a 'grammaticus,' but that did not make him learned or a philosopher; and the university had expressly been founded to train philosophers. To know words belonged to boys." This contention failed at the time, but by a peculiar development of tradition the humanities are now exclusively taught to boys in the German gymnasiums (colleges), and philosophy or the arts, in succession to the quadrivium of real knowledge is taught at the universities, along with law, medicine and theology.

The amount of advance in education at the revival of learning has been grossly exaggerated. The later linguistic education does not differ essentially from that of the schoolmen. If anything, the direct disputation about words and the dialecticism of the schoolmen was the more healthy, vigorous and practical exercise. The study of the classics, as well as the study of the schoolmen, was a study of words. The mediaeval scholars, as was natural from their former practices and the natural tendency of the human mind, took more to the mediums, in which ideas were expressed, than to the ideas themselves. Therefore, the Greek and Latin languages remained subjects of study rather than Greek philosophy and Roman law, or the small amount of real knowledge to be found in the more classic literary works of those languages.

When Greek and Latin humanism became firmly established in the schools education was entirely in charge of the clergy. Scholars were kept as long as possible under the dominaton of the church in the school discipline. Indeed, the clerical schools verged into the monastery. The scholar was to become priest or minister, who in turn was a teacher for his lifetime. Even the great Luther could very illogically write: "We cannot preserve the gospel without the ancient languages. They are the sheath wherein is contained the knife of the Spirit; they are the shrine that holds the jewel."

In this connection it must be remarked that the real spirit of the classical culture was entirely different from the spirit of the mediaeval church and from the spirit of either the Old or New Testament of the Hebrew Scriptures. Yet the old clergy who dwelt in the traditions which had arisen since Christ taught and the new Protestant ministry who pretended to appeal to the word and spirit of the Scriptures, both cultivated the languages of the heathen culture.

Words indeed kill the spirit. Not one person in a hundred studying a language obtains any impression of the real spirit of the texts studied, but their minds are opened to any impressions of the moment and of the locality, of the environment.

A course in college or a liberal education in England and America is still based on Latin, Greek and mathematics, the tripos of the English universities. As I write a wail comes across the sea that "Oxford is so poor that without more income she must remain the teacher of the humanities and mathematics, as she has been." The teaching of these is so simple, has been so extensive, and is so standardized and systematized that the poor, small and unenterprising college can make a brave show of educational work" with very little exertion of the intellect either of teachers, students or trustees.

As at present organized, a locomotive factory requires and receives far more skill and intelligence in its management than a college turning out as many students as the factory turns out locomotives. The shop uses intellectual force at high pressure. The college collects a few pedagogues able to hear recitations in Latin, Greek and mathematics, and a few inconsequential frills, and the whole thing runs easily now that college begging has been reduced to routine and giving to educational institutions has become a fashion. The factory continually improves its processes and its output. The college uses the methods of five hundred years ago, and turns out men rendered more and more foolish in their out-of-date suit of mediaeval intellectual armor.

There is a growing disposition to substitute for the classics, especially Greek, modern languages, for language still seems to be regarded as the prime requisite of education or learning, both among educators and the public. One's scholastic attainments are popularly estimated by the number of languages with which he is supposed to be acquainted. In fact, the education of the schools, whether in the classical or any other course, is mostly a matter of studying languages by the grammatical method. To other studies, even including mathematics, teachers or students, and frequently both, are supremely indifferent.

There is, however, a growing feeling, not often expressed, that language study is not a man's work. The movement to make the college course three years, instead of four, is combined with a tendency to raise the standard of admission and relegate most of the schoolboy Latin and Greek, and even modern languages, to the secondary schools. This reveals the fact that there would be little left of the regular college course, which might be reduced to one or two years as well as to three years.

Most cultivated people, and probably most of our educators, would be entirely at sea for an educational program if they were deprived of their easy refuge in the classics or modern languages. It is getting to be a serious problem to keep the colleges in their position in the educational system. Sensible men see that the classical farce must soon end, when such strong and advanced universities as Cornell, Michigan, Wisconsin and Stanford are granting the A. B. degree without either Greek or Latin. It is plain to everybody that without these time consumers there would be no excuse for holding young men seven to ten years in the higher schools. It is perfectly plain that the modern-language polyglot is not a man of liberal education.

The educators are in a dilemma. They must further increase the time spent in the schools, so that the colleges may get classically educated men of twenty-one to put through a philosophical course in real science or undertake to make philosophers of boys of sixteen. They plainly see that an education that makes the doctor, lawyer and preacher twenty-eight when he begins life in this age of quick acting intellectual force, is impossible. It is also perfectly plain that the body of modern science and real knowledge cannot be stuffed, in bulk, into boys, with advantage. Then why not let the boys go into apprenticeship to their trades, occupations and professions at sixteen or eighteen and pick up the knowledge they need as they need it?

As in the case of all other venerable institutions, the existence of the college course tends to be made secure and everlasting because it is ingrained in the habits and traditions of many people and is defended by the vested interests of those directly affected. It is not likely that the classical studies could long stand before the commonsense of the world were it not for the vested interests concerned. The schools are prepared to teach little else. Men are making their living teaching Greek and Latin. Millions of dollars are invested by the publishers in the books without end devoted to the dissection of Latin and Greek words, grammar and literature. These books are still increasing in number. Between teachers, school plants and the publishing interests thousands of people and millions in property depend on the patronage of the classical learning.

Yet, after all, it seems a miracle that the formal, verbal education called liberal should have such a hold on the most advanced of the races which seem most to dwell in pure reason. But habit, tradition and custom, with their attendant vested interests, constitute the greatest power in the world. They affect the greatest intellects and the most intellectual nations, and seem sometimes to nullify all the power of the intellectual force.

W. ALDRICH.

Jefferson, Va., August 15th.

LUCKY COURT ATTENDANTS.

Even Unopened Bottles Go to Attendants at Austrian Court.

Court etiquette in Austria is more stringent than in other European courts. The attendants come in for large perquisites, as articles are never allowed to appear twice on the royal tables.

It must be a good thing to be one of these attendants, as to one man falls all the uncorked bottles, to another the wine left in the glasses, and the game, fish and sweets are equally divided in the same way.

Each morning a market is held in the basement of the palace, where the Viennese come to purchase the remains of the banquet. This custom is a revival of one that obtained great favor in the medieval ages.

Then the great lords of the land were not above accepting the remains of a feast, and the lord chancellor was entitled to the ends of one large candle and forty small ones each day.

He, in his turn, made capital of this perquisite, and undoubtedly his exchequer was greatly increased by it at the end of the year.—Stray Stories.

Sealed Proposals.

Wilmington, N. C., August 16, 1907.

SEALED PROPOSALS WILL BE RECEIVED at the office of E. B. Pleasants, chief engineer Atlantic Coast Line R. R., Wilmington, N. C., until 12 o'clock noon, AUGUST 28, 1907, for the erection of the Union Station at Goldsboro, N. C., for the Goldsboro Union Station Company. Plans and specifications can be seen in the superintendent's office, at Richmond and Norfolk, Va., assistant engineer's office, at Goldsboro, and at the office of chief engineer Atlantic Coast Line, Wilmington, N. C. All bids must be sent to E. B. Pleasants, Chief Engineer, Atlantic Coast Line, Wilmington, N. C. The company reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

GOLDSBORO UNION STATION CO.

SEALED PROPOSALS WILL BE RECEIVED at Yorktown on TUESDAY, September 3, 1907, at 2 P. M., by the Board of Supervisors of York county, Va., for the construction of 65 per cent. of the distance of a public road leading from Oriano Station, Chesapeake and Ohio Railway, to "Kentucky Farm," York county, Va., and the Board of Supervisors of Warwick county will meet at Yorktown on the above named date and receive bids for the remaining 35 per cent. of the distance of said road. The whole distance is about two miles. For plans and specifications apply to D. R. Norment, Magruder, Va., and B. P. Smith, Denbigh, Va.

D. R. NORMENT, Chair'n.
B. P. SMITH, Chair'n.

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